

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 OC-06 CCO-00 PER-01 MMO-01

A-01 OPR-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FS-01 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 DODE-00 EUR-12 SY-05 CU-02

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6112

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, CH

SUBJECT: CHINA EARTHQUAKE

REF: PEKING 1458

1. SINCE MFA NOTICE TO DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AUGUST 1 (CONCERNING WHICH SEE PARA 5 BELOW), THERE HAVE BEEN NO PERCEPTIBLE TREMORS IN PEKING. NEVERTHELESS, MFA PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT NOTIFIED US MORNING OF AUGUST THAT IN PERIOD JULY 31-AUGUST 1 THE TANGSHAN AREA HAD EXPERIENCED 110 TREMORS, INCLUDING 15 OF OVER 5 MAGNITUDE.

2. GENERAL SITUATION IN PEKING HAS CHANGED LITTLE OVER THE WEEKEND. PEOPLE CONTINUE TO APPEAR CALM AND GENERALLY IN GOOD SPIRITS; MANY EVEN SEEM TO BE ENJOYING THE CURBSIDE AND PARK CAMPING LIFE. THUS FAR ERECTION OF SHELTERS HAS BEEN LARGELY A MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY ENTERPRISE, AND CONSIDERABLE RESOURCEFULNESS IS SHOWN IN BOTH THE DESIGN AND COMPOSITION OF HUTS, TENTS, LEAN-TO'S AND WHAT NOT. PROBABLY A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE NOT SLEEPING VERY WELL; HOWEVER, IN PART BECAUSE FEW SHELTERS ARE PROTECTED

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FROM MOSQUITOS. SLEEPY TYPESETTERS AT KUANGMING DAILY

PRESUMABLY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FACT THAT THE PAGE 1 HEADLINES WERE REVERSED IN THIS MORNING'S EDITION (CORRECTED COPIES WERE SUBSTITUTED LATER).

3. MOST DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS HAVE BEGUN TO SEND THEIR DEPENDENTS OUT OF CHINA, WHILE SOME ARE ALSO BEGINNING TO REDUCE THEIR STAFF. A NUMBER OF SMALL THIRD WORLD EMBASSIES HAVE MOVED TO CANTON, WHERE "FACILITIES" (INCLUDING WE ASSUME GENEROUS CREDIT TERMS WHERE NEEDED) ARE BEING PROVIDED. SOVIET EMBASSY HAS FLOWN IN TENTS FOR ITS 300-PLUS STAFF AND DEPENDENTS TO SLEEP IN. A SOVIET OFFICIAL TOLD US AUGUST 2 THERE HAD BEEN NO DECISION YET TO EVACUATE ANYONE.

4. MOST NONDIPLOMATIC FOREIGNERS IN PEKING ARE NOW HOUSED IN TENTS IN SOUTHEAST PART OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY (WORKERS' CULTURAL PALACE PARK). AREA IS SEALED OFF BY SECURITY GUARDS, AND USLO OFFICER YESTERDAY WAS REFUSED PERMISSION TO VISIT SITE. RESIDENTS OF TENTS ARE ALLOWED OUTSIDE ONLY FOR BRIEF PERIODS EACH DAY. FOREIGN STUDENTS AT PEKING FOREIGN LANGUAGES INSTITUTE, MEANWHILE, HAVE BEEN INVITED TO JOIN A TOUR TO KWEILIN, PERHAPS AS A MEANS TO GET THEM OUT OF THE CITY. FOREIGN STUDENTS FROM PEKING UNIVERSITY WHO WERE ON A SCHOOL-SPONSORED TOUR OF THE NORTHEAST WHEN THE EARTHQUAKE OCCURRED ARE CONTINUING ON THEIR ORIGINAL ITINERARY, WHICH WILL KEEP THEM AWAY FROM PEKING FOR ANOTHER WEEK.

5. LATE YESTERDAY USLO LOCAL STAFF MEMBER INFORMED US THAT NOTIFICATION EARLIER IN THE DAY ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF A STRONG QUAKE IN THE PEKING AREA "WITHIN THE MONTH" SHOULD INSTEAD HAVE READ "WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS."
GATES

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Message Attributes

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